

City of Carmel

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Carmel to replace, improve city zoning ordinance

Fewer pages / 3 new zoning districts / '5-Minute' code

CARMEL, IN – After an 18-month long review of the City of Carmel's subdivision control and zoning ordinance, planners with the Department of Community Services unveiled a new and improved version that streamlines topics, adds helpful images, eliminates redundancies and has about 80 fewer pages. The proposed ordinance also establishes three new zoning districts to better reflect the unique growth trends of the city, eliminates three outdated districts and promises to make it easier for users to quickly find what they need.

While this is a complete replacement ordinance and zoning map, most of the content remains the same as the existing ordinance. The proposed new Unified Development Ordinance replaces both the subdivision control and existing zoning ordinances.

"This is long overdue. Carmel's zoning ordinance has been modified many times over the years, but the changes we are making this time will help us do a better job of guiding our unique growth in redevelopment areas, such as Midtown, as well as the U.S. 31 Corridor and other rapidly changing areas of our city," said Mayor Jim Brainard. "We also paid close attention to making this new ordinance easier to use for developers and residents. We are calling this our '5-Minute Code' because our goal is to make it possible for anyone, not just attorneys, to find what they need in five minutes or less."

The proposed new Unified Development Ordinance was introduced Tuesday night, March 21, at the Carmel Plan Commission, which will review the changes, host a public

hearing and send it to the Carmel City Council for final approval. The City contracted with Bradley Johnson of Ground Rules to review and update the ordinance.

There are no substantial changes proposed to residential areas in the city.

Among the notable new features:

- Three new zoning districts have been added: *Urban Residential*, *Urban Core* and *Office Core*. These districts will emphasize “mixed-use” trends in Carmel’s redevelopment areas such as Midtown.

- With changes proposed for the Meridian Corporate Corridor, it will be possible for the first time to mix residential and office units the same building, something previously prohibited. Changes have also been made to setbacks and landscaping rules to encourage more infill development.

- Three existing zoning districts have been removed: *Agricultural (AG)* and *Manufacturing I (M-1)*, districts covering large farms and heavy, intense manufacturing that have become obsolete as the city has developed and do not appear on the existing map; and *Old Meridian District (OM)* which served its original purpose to introduce mixed-use development to the area. The new mixed-use districts will largely replace the OM District. Farming is still a permitted use but will be regulated under another zoning classification.

- All legal definitions within the ordinance have been placed under a single section, instead of being scattered throughout the document.

- References to various steps in zoning have been made more consistent, replacing the current use of multiple acronyms and titles.

- Helpful boxes, color icons and hyperlinks have been added throughout the new ordinance so that online users can quickly point and click their way to their desired information.

A public hearing will be held at the Carmel Plan Commission on April 18. You can find an overview and a copy of the proposed ordinance on the City of Carmel website here: www.carmel.in.gov/index.aspx?page=837.